



## **Introduction**

Once again, we find ourselves in the early stages of an extended period of online teaching and learning. Many of you will recall that we re-shaped the structure of the day and week for the Summer Term, and reflecting on what we already know about the challenges of online education, and on our experience last summer, we have again re-structured the curriculum and timetable.

One of the clearest lessons from last summer was that pupils have a finite capacity for online learning – and, indeed, our teachers have a finite capacity for online teaching. Hours and hours spent staring at a screen are not good for anyone’s mental health, so whilst the number of lessons has been reduced, your pupils will be required to complete a significant degree of independent study, in the form of extended preps and project-work. There is anyway, of course, a secure pedagogical rationale for this style of learning.

The most significant difference between this lock-down and last summer’s, of course, is that rather than approaching the tail-end of their courses, our Year 11 and Upper Sixth pupils are at a critical moment in their school careers, and under normal circumstances would be preparing for important public examinations. For this reason, their school day will remain quite long.

Last summer, we wrote a Guide for Pupils, which went out to all pupils from Year 7 upwards, making clear how we expected them to engage in online lessons. This is shortly to be sent to all the pupils again, and a copy is attached to this Update for your information.

## **Teaching Timetables**

The timetables for your son or daughter’s year group, from Year 1 to Year 11, are attached together with this Update, and you will be able to see from these how their days will be filled.

The basic plan, however, is as follows:

- Pupils in Years 1 to 4 will have three lessons per morning, of 45 minutes each.
- Pupils in Years 5 to 6 will have between three to four lessons per morning, of 45 minutes each.
- Pupils in Year 7 to 8 will mostly have four lessons per morning, of 45 minutes each.

- Pupils in Year 9 have four lessons per day, of 45 minutes each, with some lessons being after lunch.
- Pupils in Years 10 & 11 will lose some lessons in most subjects, but for the most part the timetable remains unchanged.
- Pupils in the Sixth Form will find that their curriculum and timetable are fundamentally unchanged, as they, of course, have private study periods built into their working day.

Pupils at the Prep will have PSHE and a Tutor Checkout on Friday afternoon at 14:00. Tutorials at the College will be by arrangements with Tutors, depending on the finish time for each day.

### **Public Examinations, 13+ Scholarships and Internal Examinations & Assessments**

Clearly, there remains great uncertainty with regards to the way in which grades will be determined for those pupils who would have expected to sit GCSE and A levels. We are hoping to receive more guidance from the government and OfQual in due course, and by the end of the next week would hope to be able to make the school's position clearer.

Arrangements for the 13+ Scholarships, and for the programme of internal examinations and assessments will, necessarily, be revised, and further details will follow in due course. You will appreciate that conducting assessments online is less than ideal, so it is likely that we will simply continue to teach without interruption.

### **Swimming**

All our swimmers will by now have heard, or will very shortly hear, from their coaches, with a general overview and individual athlete update, and Ms Collings-Barnes will publish the forthcoming week's training schedule each Saturday morning.

### **Extra-Curricular**

You will appreciate that we wanted to tie down the details of the academic programme before committing to very much beyond that. Having sorted the shape of the academic week, however, we are now able to turn our minds to the extra-curricular side of life, and a programme similar to that which was offered in the Summer Term will be in place from Mon 18 Jan. In the meantime, there will be a limited programme of online sport and exercise in the coming week.

## **Conclusion**

This remains a challenging time for all of us, but we feel that we have a sufficiently robust academic plan to ensure your children will not be blown off-course by the winds that are currently buffeting us. Perhaps the less obvious danger, and this is particularly the case in the depths of winter, is that your sons and daughters get a touch of cabin fever, cooped up at home for hours on end as they are.

Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to say this is the last you will hear from us for a while, but this is the fifth Parent Update since the end of the Michaelmas Term, and it seems likely that more will follow, so do keep an eye on your inboxes.

In the meantime, encourage your children to step away from their screens and – despite the weather – to get outside; as William Gilpin put it over two hundred years ago, “High places and extended views have ever been propitious to excursions of the imagination”.